



British Lutheran



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COMMENT

A NEW DRESS

With this issue, the BRITISH LUTHERAN changes from a bulletin run off in a parsonage on a duplicating machine to a printed magazine. Readers, overseas especially, have long urged the change.

Apart from the better appearance in the new form, when the number of copies per issue rises to 2,000, printing becomes advisable even on the grounds of economy.

Size and format remain largely the same so does the purpose. Since its inception in March 1956, the first intention of the BRITISH LUTHERAN has been to inform people at home and abroad of the progress of the Gospel in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England and thus to solicit their interest and prayers. The other object has been to edify its readers through missionary, historical, and doctrinal articles. Though not restricted to one page length as heretofore, the articles will remain brief and their style chatty and informal.

The response of readers to the Questionnaire sent out with the December BRITISH LUTHERAN have been helpful. "Key Words" scored high and will continue as will "Question and Answer", though under a new name, "You Want to Know". The popular round-up of ELCE parishes, "From the Taff to the Tyne", will retain its place as the centre-piece of the publication. Two new series will be introduced: "Hymns We Love"

with this issue, and "Lutheran Worship" later on A new department, "Your Point of View", is under consideration. Letters expressing points of view on problems confronting the Church will be welcomed and will be published in whole or in part if suitable for publication.

The BRITISH LUTHERAN requests the prayers of its readers that the Saviour may use it for the encouragement of His people and for a witness to His grace

TWENTY-SIX MEN

As our church grows in size, it develops in maturity. A sign of this was a resolution passed by last year's Synod at Boreham Wood instituting the Annual Synodical Budget Conference. As reported elsewhere in the BRITISH LUTHERAN, the first such Conference will take place in London on 12 March. Twenty-six men representing every congregation, mission, and eligible board of the church will sit down to examine, to amend, and to approve the anticipated incomes and expenditures of the 1961 ELCE budget.

Except the annual Synod itself, the March conference will be the most important church meeting in the year 1960. Until now, the vital responsibility of setting the church's budget has been left in the hands of the seven men of the Executive Council. They will still have the task of preparing the necessary financial state-

(MORE ON NEXT PAGE)

You want to know

QUESTION: My God is large enough to embrace many faiths, as long as they strive to follow the Bible. How big is your God?

Answer: My God is as big as He has described Himself in the Bible. He is a God who is not willing that any should perish, 2 Peter 3: 9, and to that end gave His only-begotten Son to reconcile the world to Himself, 2 Cor. 5: 18-19. To that end He asks all men to repent and to believe the Gospel, Mark 1:15. No sinner has the right to feel unwanted by Him, Is. 1:8; 1 John 1:7. Even those who err in certain doctrines or practices, but stand firm on Christ, the Rock of our Salvation, will be saved, though their false works will perish 1 Cor. 3:15.

But this great God of Love does not, as you state, "embrace many

faiths". Salvation is only by acceptance of the one true God, John 17:3, and by faith in Christ, Acts 4:12.

Lastly, my God is big enough so that we creatures of dust cannot reconstruct and reshape Him to suit our whims and fancies. He is big enough to bring us all before the judgment throne on the Last Day. It is part of the wisdom to study God as He has revealed Himself in the Bible, and to be guided by His Word. Teachings which conflict with the Bible do not have the right of existence in God's church.

(From *The Lutheran Witness*).

comment

from page two

ments and budget estimates but, from now on, the final Yes or No will be spoken by the Budget Conference. Each item of expenditure and income will be scanned and assessed. Every delegate to the Conference will be able to report to the group he represents exactly how the church is spending the money given for the spread of the Gospel.

The Executive Council who proposed the resolution to the 1959 Synod welcome this step forward in our church's life because it gives every congregation and mission a voice in shaping policies and decisions. It broadens the basis of the whole structure of the church. What

affects the whole church should be decided by the whole church.

It is obvious that delegates to the Conference should be selected with great care. Since financial matters will be dealt with, the man who has proven his ability as treasurer or member of the stewardship committee might be chosen. Since the expansion of Christ's kingdom is the real objective behind the budget, elect the man who has a real concern for souls.

God will do a lot for our church if on 12 March twenty-six men gather who have a head for figures and a heart for missions.

Hymns we love

"NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD"

This was the hymn the nation sang at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. Christians of all denominations in Britain sing it today when their altars are decked with the flowers and fruit of Harvest thanksgiving. But these are not the context in which this famous hymn was written. It arose out of the plague and death, the brutality and famine of the Thirty Years War.

The little town of Eilenburg in Saxony was crowded with refugees and wounded from the War when, in 1637, the plague struck. Weakened by famine and disease, people died like flies. Only one pastor was left to minister to sick and dying. Martin Rinckart had up to 50 funerals a day. 8,000 people died, among them the pastor's own wife. Burials had to take place finally in open trenches. And this was not all. Three times enemy armies overran and sacked the tormented town.

There is no evidence that this hymn was written to mark the end of the Thirty Years War, as has been asserted, but there can be no doubt that it was born out of the misery of this period. Actually, it was not intended by the author to be a hymn for the congregation but, as its original title indicates, a Grace to be sung at the family table.

The Author

As a lad, Martin Rinckart (1586-1649) was a choir boy at St. Thomas, Leipzig, the church made famous a century later by Johann Sebastian Bach. After holding pastorates elsewhere, Rinckart became in 1617 the archdeacon or bishop of Eilenburg, his native town. He was a good musician and a considerable playwright. He wrote a cycle of seven dramas on the Reformation. Of his sixty-six hymns, "Now Thank We All Our God" has become the cherished property of all Christendom and its most famous hymn of thanksgiving.

Inspiration from the "Apocrypha"

The impulse to thank and praise God is always in the heart of a believing man, whatever the circumstances of the world around him.

And free us from all ills,
In this world and the next

is the only glimpse the author gives of the slaughter and misery of the world outside him as he wrote the hymn. All else is pure, triumphant *Te Deum* for the wonderful act the blessings from our mother arms, the bounty, the guidance which all come from the great God who has shown Himself in Jesus Christ our Saviour. This hymn illustrates what the faithless world simply cannot understand and refuses to believe: that suffering draws the

iever closer to God in trust and
hanksgiving.

Unlike our own, Martin Rinckart's Bible included the Apocrypha with Luther's note: "not equal with Holy Scriptures but good and profitable to read".

From these verses in the apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus (50: 22-23), Rinckart drew inspiration for the first two stanzas.

And now bless ye the God of all,
Who everywhere doeth great things,
Who exalteth our days from the womb,
And dealeth with us according to His mercy,
May he grant us joyful hears,
And may peace be in our days forever.

The last stanza is a metrical form of the *Gloria Patri*.

From

LUTHER

On Absolution

Here the power of absolution is given to all Christians, although some, like the pope, bishops, priests, and monks, have appropriated it to themselves alone. They say publicly and shamelessly that this power is given to them alone and not to the laymen as well. But Christ is speaking here (i.e. John 20: 19-31) neither of priests nor monks. On the contrary, He says: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost". This power is given to him who has the Holy Ghost, that is, to him who is a Christian. But who is a Christian? He who believes. He

who believes has the Holy Ghost. Therefore every Christian has the power . . . to retain or to remit sins.

Now perhaps I shall hear the question: I may, then, hear confession, baptize, preach, administer the Sacrament of the Altar? No. St. Paul says: "Let all things be done decently and in order", I Cor., 14:40. If everybody wanted to hear confession, to baptize, to administer the Sacrament, how unseemly that would be! Again, If everybody desired to preach, who would listen? If we were all to preach at the same time, what a confused chattering that would be, such as you now hear among the frogs!

Therefore it should be thus: the congregation chooses a suitable person who administers the Sacrament, preaches, hears confession, and baptizes. To be sure, all of us possess this power; but no one except him who is chosen by the congregation to do so should presume to practise it publicly. In private, I certainly may use this power. If, for instance, my neighbour comes and says: My friend, I am burdened in conscience, speak a word of absolution to me; then I am at liberty to do so. But *in private*, I say, this must be done. If I wanted to sit in the church, another man too, and we all wanted to hear confession, what rhyme or reason would there be in such conduct? Take an illustration. When a nobleman has many heirs, one is chosen, with the consent of all the others, who alone has the rule on behalf of the others. For what would happen if everybody wanted to rule over a country and its people?

(What Luther Says 1, 5 Ewāld Plass)

FROM THE TA

RUISLIP

The young folks of St. Andrews Lutheran Youth Club thought they had a good idea. They approached their minister. Pastor Rakow agreed. On 5 January the Lutheran youngsters invited other youth clubs in the district to their Twelfth Night Party. Young people from Bourne Youth Club, Baptist Young Peoples Fellowship, and Luther-Tyndale Youth Club of Kentish Town attended. And the local newspaper thought it was a good idea, too: a four-column picture appeared in the next issue of the *Ruislip Post*.

The new church is ten days behind its construction schedule due to persistent rain, but the builders are still confident that it will be ready for dedication on Whitsunday. This was the report of Architects Bader and Miller to St. Andrews Building Committee on 8 January. Also discussed were the material and design of furnishings and the amplifier to the "crying room". The architects propose a concrete altar cantilevered out of the east wall, a communion rail with wrought iron supports, and open-backed pews.

SUNDERLAND

Do regular and well-organised Teachers' Meetings mean better Sunday School attendances? St. Timothy's teachers have just finished "Home Life in Bible Times" and are beginning "Teaching in the Sunday School". The study and discussion of

such books are the core of their meetings. And, week by week, attendances at St. Timothy's Sunday School have been rising. So?

TOTTENHAM

Usually a church expects the visit of the Mayor on special occasions and at the invitation of the church. But at Holy Trinity on New Years Eve, the Mayor and Mayoress of Tottenham came to the candlemas service at their own request, to the pleasant surprise of the congregation. The film "The Great Mr. Handel", shown just before the 11 p.m. service, was enjoyed by a small audience.

HARLOW

What a disappointment to attend a service in which you cannot sing the hymns because they are unknown to you. Our newest mission is finding a solution to this old problem which confronts every new ELCE station. "Family Nights" are arranged once a month, entertainment and games in which the whole family, toddlers and grown-ups alike, can join. "Family Night" ends with hymn singing, trying one tune after another until one is found that everyone knows. Result: no longer a solo by the pastor with a few brave voices trying their best to follow, but a full-throated and confident congregation really enjoying their worship in hymns. And, at the same time, a growing list of familiar hymn-tunes which will benefit every future ELCE mission.

TO THE TYNE

Worship, Education, Recreation, and Service are the four objects of the Lutheran Boys Club organised at Harlow. Mr. F. McWilliam, the leader, says the new club has the backing of all the boys and will play its part in the development of the new Lutheran church at Bush Fair. Tenders are out now for the construction of the new building.

BOREHAM WOOD

Stage two in the growth of the Lutheran Mission at Boreham Wood has been helped by the Confirmation of four adults on 13 December. Pastor Borgas reports that plans are under way for adopting a constitution and forming St. Pauls Lutheran Church, the sixth ELCE congregation. He also expects the early organisation of a women's group. Services of Holy Communion now take place twice each month, the first Sunday in the morning, the third in the evening.

CARDIFF

After weeks of delay, the first ELCE-owned buildings in Wales was opened for worship on 3 January. Thirty-two attended the service. The building, a small prefabricated timber hall, will serve as the Lutheran centre until the new Fairwater Lutheran church, now out to tender, will be erected, probably early in 1961. Sunday School children distributed 2,000 handbills in the neighbourhood announcing the new location. Church activities, restricted

until now to two days a week at Fairwater Institute, will be intensified, Pastor Marvin Brammeier states.

KENTISH TOWN

Luther-Tyndale Youth Club is all set for its first football match in Woking on Saturday, 30 January. Last-minute difficulties in Woking postponed the game which should have taken place some weeks ago, but the Kentish Town lads are making good use of the extra time. Strict training rules, once-a-week practices, chalk-talks on play-tactics every Monday are continuing for the day when 24-year-old George Day of Leighton Grove will lead his black-and-white uniformed squad onto the field.

The football team has sparked the whole youth programme of Luther-Tyndale Church with a new enthusiasm. Pastor Norman Heintz reports a jump in enrolment from 6 to 19 at Junior Youth Club, to which all the players belong. Sunday School attendance at the age level 12-14 has risen from 4 to 16.

After the big match on 30 January, the Kentish Town team will be ready to take on any Lutheran club in the London area. Any comers, Tottenham, Ruislip, Boreham Wood, or Harlow?

BROMLEY

When Pastor John Sims arose on Tuesday evening, 19 January, to conduct the opening devotion in the tiny chapel of the YWCA building in

(MORE ON PAGE ELEVEN)

key words|

regeneration

Like Natural Birth

Often we hear it said, "God offers eternal life in Heaven to everyone — free; all we have to do is accept the offer and take it". And everyone nods approval. But really God has to do more than just "offer" eternal life in Heaven. Could you imagine someone trying to "offer" life to an unborn baby by saying "Here is air and food: take it and live?" An embryo has neither the perception of a need to live nor the ability to come to life. It must be conceived in the womb, be nurtured, and be brought forth. Having been given life, it now lives, breathes, loves, and grows.

Not Better People, But New Creatures

Biological life and Spiritual life are two different things; but both must be given to us. The person with only biological life (flesh and blood life) "cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" I Cor. 15:50, no matter how good he may be. It isn't enough to be better people; we must be new creatures with a different kind of life.

Spiritual Birth

But the natural man has neither an awareness of a need for spiritual life nor the ability to generate that life. I Cor. 2:14. "Except a man be born (again) of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". John 3: 5-6. "You are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the

Word of God", I Peter 1:23, "by the washing of regeneration", Titus 3:5, "buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses". Col. 2:12-13.

The New Life

My being born into God's Kingdom is not by my desiring or striving, but by the will and work of God the Holy Spirit through the word of God and the Sacrament of Baptism, the Spirit's "Seed and Womb" for the generation of spiritual life, James 1:18. And now I live, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me", Gal. 2:20. The saving faith in Christ is the evidence and means of my spiritual life, i.e., its breath and heartbeat, I John 5:1. It is sustained by "the sincere milk of the Word", I Peter 2:2. It is lived in the continual experiencing of the repentance and remission of sins through the death and resurrection of Christ, Col. 2:13. It learns and grows in the art of spiritual living, Rom. 6: 1-11. Gal. 5:16-25, I John 3, etc. And it has the promise of greater things to come, I John 3:2.

This is the great miracle of spiritual birth, regeneration; by which I am brought into God's family, Gal. 3:26, and made heirs of His Kingdom, Gal. 4:7, Titus 3:7.

BY ARNOLD RAKOW

Our Church in the NEWS

£12,000 Target Set For CEF Again In 1960

The same goal and the same slogan as in 1959 were adopted for the 1960 CEF Year, beginning 1 February, by the CEF Committee at their meeting at 42 Museum Street, London, on 13 January. £12,000 has been the target figure for the CEF for the past three years. In 1957, the year of its inception, the goal was realised; in 1958, £6,640 were raised in loans and gifts; the figure for 1959, with one month to go, is £10,224.

Every Member a Regular Investor, the 1959 slogan, was retained because its object had not been achieved. One-third of ELCE members had yet to make their first investment in the Fund. The Committee felt that the repetition of the slogan would call attention to this and stimulate every member to become an investor.

Mr. Mervin Kelly, member of Christ Lutheran Church of Petts Wood, was asked to serve on the committee. The addition of a fourth member will need ratification at the 1960 Synod.

Caroling With A Difference

Lutheran singers caroled in the streets of Ruislip, Kentish Town and Boreham Wood in the days before Christmas, but it was caroling with a difference.

At Ruislip, a group from St. Andrews sang favourite Christmas

ballads but, as they moved up one street and down the other, they placed specially-printed Christmas cards into every home. Thus, 1,000 neighbours received Christmas greetings from St. Andrews Lutheran Congregation and an invitation to attend their festival services.

At Kentish Town, young people from Luther-Tyndale caroled from house to house — and collected £3-17s.9d. for the underprivileged children of Dr. Barnardo's Homes.

It was something like that at Boreham Wood. On the Tuesday and Wednesday before Christmas a dozen enthusiastic Lutheran carolers gathered over £7 for the Elstree and District Old Peoples Welfare Fun.

Lutherans do not solicit gifts from the general public for their church. But in using the occasion to extend good wishes to their neighbours and to make a happier Christmas for children and old people, they returned to the spirit, so largely lost, which gave rise to the tradition of street caroling.

Pastors Recommend Youth Seminar

A study conference to be sponsored by the Board for Youth to which youth representatives, youth counsellors, and pastors would be invited was recommended by ELCE pastors at their bi-monthly Barnes Conference at 42 Museum Street, London, 11-12 January. Lengthy discussion was given to the differing problems of youth work in ELCE

congregations and missions. It was felt that such a seminar would help develop common approaches to common problems.

The assembled pastors also appointed a committee to explore the possibility of making up and printing Children's Christmas Programmes for use in this country. Pastor Hans Lutz-Poetsch of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany spoke of the awakening interest in evangelism in his church. Dr. E. Geo. Pearce reported on the International Lutheran Theologian's Conference held at Oakland, California in June, 1959.

Two doctrinal papers were read: "Faith and Conversion" by Pastor Norman Heintz, and "Faith and the Means of Grace" by Pastor T. Stoy of the Polish Lutheran Church in Britain. Pastor V. Hennig gave an overview of the Letters to the Seven Churches in the Book of Revelation.

Attending the Conference were Chaplain Elmer Schwarzkopf of the USAF, Pastor Poetsch, four pastors of the Polish Lutheran Church, and ten ELCE pastors.

Boston Pastor Called To Cambridge

The Rev. Kenneth Mahler, pastor of St. John Lutheran Church of South Weymouth near Boston, Massachusetts, has been called by the ELCE Executive Council to Cambridge.

Since his graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1954, Pastor Mahler has served his present congregation which he has seen grow in five years from a new names on a prospect list to a church with 318 members and its own new build-

ing. A Hebrew scholar, he is contributing to a series of Old Testament commentaries to be published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

It he accepts the call, Pastor Mahler will assume a threefold responsibility: to minister to the American Lutheran servicemen at USAF bases in the district, to develop an ELCE congregation in Cambridge, and by postgraduate study at the University to become ultimately the second Lutheran tutor in the ELCE theological training programme.

"Manchester Guardian" Notes ELCE Progress

The national press is showing an increasing interest in the ELCE. The *Daily Telegraph*, on 29 December, printed a sketch of the proposed Harlow "church without walls". On 15 January, the *Manchester Guardian* published a three-paragraph story. "The Lutheran Church in England and Wales takes a leap forward with the opening of four new churches in Harlow, Ruislip, Sunderland and Cardiff", it said. "The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England intends to add a church a year for the next ten years". On the design of the new buildings, the *Guardian* said: "The Lutherans have a flair for modernity in the new churches".

Lutheran Hour Sunday Set For 6 March

Wherever you worship in the ELCE, on 6 March, the First Sunday in Lent, you will hear the same sermon subject. Carrying out Resolution 5 of the 1959 Synod, all congregations and missions will observe "Lutheran Hour Sunday". Publicity materials and special offering

envelopes will be made available from the London office of the International Lutheran Hour.

Mr. Eric Smith, Lutheran Agencies manager, also reported on the Christmas mass mailing from 42 Museum Street 8-10 December. More than 22,000 items were collated, addressed, and dispatched to Lutheran Hour listeners all over the British Isles. The number of volunteer helpers was disappointingly small, Mr. Smith said, "but", he added, "we are grateful to the few who stayed with the job until it was finished".

Budget Conference Date Changed To 12 March

The date for the first Synodical Budget Conference, announced in the November BRITISH LUTHERAN for 20 February, has been changed to 12 March. The postponement was agreed by the Executive Council to allow sufficient time for preparation by the Council of the 1959 Annual Statement and of the budget proposals for 1961.

According to Resolution 8 of the 1959 Synod at Boreham Wood,

The Synodical Budget Conference shall be composed of two delegates (pastor and layman) from each organisation and mission and one from each ancillary organisation; it shall consider in detail budget proposals previously discussed and formulated by the Executive Council and shall finally approve the Budget.

Another purpose of the Conference is (Official Report 1959 Synod, page 16).

to review and to seek to improve the general financial situation and the stewardship methods of the church.

(Official Report 1959 Synod, page 13).

The meeting will take place on Saturday afternoon, 12 March, beginning at 1.30 p.m.

1960 Youth Tour To Germany

The Lutheran Theological High School at Oberursel outside Frankfurt will provide accommodation for the 1960 ELCE Youth Tour, Pastor John Sims announced

recently on behalf of the Board for Youth. The High School is the training institution for pastors of the Lutheran Free Churches of Germany with whom the ELCE is in fellowship. The dates for the Tour are 18-25 August. In previous years, parties of English Lutheran youth have visited France and Denmark. One of the objects of the annual European visit is to acquaint Lutheran youth in Britain with their sister churches abroad.

Dates for the Annual Holiday Bible Camp at Hothorpe Hall near Rugby were also made known: Seniors 20-27 August, Juniors 27 August—2 September.

The 1960 Convention of the Luther League of Great Britain will be held 20-22 May at Hothorpe Hall. The cost will be £4 approximately, including return fare.

BROMLEY (from page seven).

Downham Way, there wasn't an empty seat. 25 people is a capacity congregation for the chapel. The elderly ladies of Bromley Lutheran Mission who use it for regular worship call it their "churchlet". When the Bromley ladies invited the Guild from Christ Lutheran Church, Petts Wood, for the special meeting, on 19 January, there were 25 women present — and three husbands.

The women gathered to hear a report, illustrated with colour slides, by Pastor E. Geo. Pearce on the Eighth Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Womens Missionary League held at Toronto, Canada, from 22-23 July, 1959.

Tea, cakes and sandwiches, provided by the Bromley ladies, were served after the lecture.

TWO DATES

1. **SIXTH ANNUAL SYNOD** at Sunderland 22-23 April.
2. **FIRST BUDGET CONFERENCE** at London 12 March.

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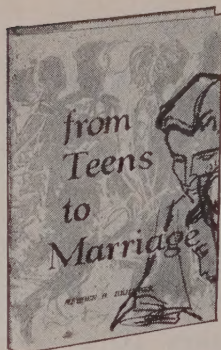
Breaking The Ground At Ruislip

Councillor E. Daniell, Chairman of Urban District Council of Ruislip - Northwood, breaks the ground for the new St. Andrews Lutheran Church at Ruislip, Middlesex, on Saturday, 7 November, watched by Dr. E. Geo. Pearce, Chairman of the ELCE Executive Council, Pastor Arnold Rakow of St. Andrews, and members of the congregation.

Photograph by:

*Ruislip-Northwood
Gazette*

*Helps you talk to your teen-ager
about "growing up"*



From Teens To Marriage

by REUBEN D. BEHLMER

112 Pages

Cloth 14

If you want to acquaint your teen-ager with the facts of life in a wholesome, forthright — and Christian — manner, **FROM TEENS TO MARRIAGE** is your answer. This book by Reuben D. Behlmer will help your son or daughter toward a successful Christian marriage and lend them a hand with their present problems and worries — about school, friends religion, their future.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION says . . .

. . . simple and straightforward. Attitudes towards sex, life, and marriage are posed in such a way that the reader will find himself reflecting on the values and attitudes which he himself holds. It would be an excellent book to orient parents to the maturing and developing opinions and ideals of their teenager.

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